

Hispanic growth focus of Baptist interest

MIAMI (BP) — The United States is the world's third-largest country in Hispanic population, missions professor Daniel Sanchez said in reflecting on a recent Barna Research Group study of U.S. Hispanics' faith.

"If we're looking at the Hispanics as a mission field, from a global perspective then the country with the third-largest Hispanic population should be a major focus of the Southern Baptist Convention's (SBC) attention," said Sanchez, director of Southwestern

are joining the Baptist church." Among other Protestant denominations, the Barna study notes, there's only "a slightly above average tendency for Hispanics to attend charismatic and Pentecostal churches."

Hispanic attendance in Catholic churches is weakening, according to the Barna study. "As recently as one decade ago, two-thirds of all Hispanic adults (68%) said the church they attended most frequently was Catholic; today that proportion is down to just half (53%)," the report stated.

Moreno noted that much of the nation's growing Hispanic population is "coming from everywhere"—from at least 23 nations primarily in Central and South America and the Caribbean.

"Ninety-five percent of them do not attend church, including the Catholic Church," Moreno said. "Hispanics are very open to the Gospel when they come to this country. If we don't take this opportunity the Lord is giving us, we are going to lose them. They are in a different country. They want to be identified with Hispanics like themselves. If we don't take advantage

of this, it's going to be hard to reach them in the future," he said.

Hispanics comprise the youngest group in the United States, Sanchez said. Half are under 25 years of age — significantly lower than the median age for the general population.

"Andrew Greeley, a Roman Catholic priest and sociologist, has been pointing out that large

numbers of Hispanics have been leaving the church in the last decade," Sanchez said. "He says currently 23 percent of Hispanics do not consider themselves Catholic.

"Barna is also correct in pointing out the trend toward religious pluralism among Hispanics," Sanchez said.

"The point to be made is, there is more receptivity to the evangelical message among Hispanics than ever before in the history of this country. I for one am very thankful for the commitment of Southern Baptists to reach Hispanics but I personally think we need a coordinated national strategy that involves all the agencies and focuses on Hispanics as a people group."

The Barna report, released Jan. 3, is available on the Internet at www.barna.org.

For a state-by-state ranking of the Hispanic population in the United States, see the U.S. Census Bureau's website: www.census.gov/population/estimates/state/rank/hisp.txt. The official 2000 census figures are set for publication in March.

Editor's note: George Barna will lead a special conference Feb. 22 at Ridgcrest Church, Madison, to assist churches in identifying and preparing for the challenges of ministry in the 21st century. For more information, call (800) 55-BARNA or visit www.barna.org.

**Seminary's Church Growth
Institute in Fort Worth, Texas.**

Hispanic work indeed receives significant focus from the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board (NAMB), state conventions, and associations of local Baptist churches across the country.

Yet the challenge of reaching U.S. Hispanics remains a monumental one.

Strategies have been implemented and church planting efforts are in place to reach 10 times as many Hispanics within the next five years as ever before, said Bob Sena, manager of the Southern Baptist NAMB's Hispanic church planting unit.

"We're not reaching many Americans of Hispanic origin," Sena said. "My deep concern is that we're not reaching many of the second and third-generation Hispanics. Reading the report from Barna made me realize how much we have done but how much more we need to do."

Frank Moreno, the Florida Convention's strategist for Hispanic* and international church planting, noted, "The [Barna] report states that fewer than one percent of Hispanics

STARTING POINT — Baptist outreach to Hispanics starts from a base of 200,000 Hispanics who are members of the Southern Baptist Convention's 2,100 Spanish-language churches — including this congregation in Oklahoma. (NAMB file photo)

WHAT'S IN THE RECORD

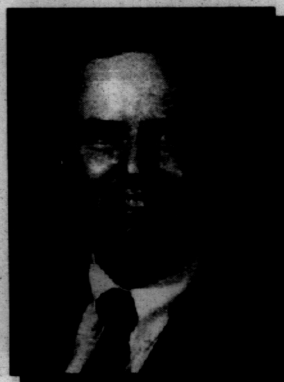
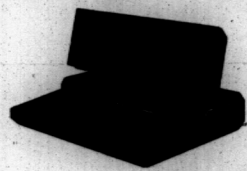
Ag missions to meet

IMB appoints couple

Letters to the editor

Sunday School lessons

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The blood of the martyrs

In keeping with a 2000-year-old tradi-
tion we'd rather not observe, the world
remains a dangerous place for
Christians — even in the so-called
"enlightened" era in which we live.

As more and more countries throw off the
oppressive yoke of totalitarianism in all its
forms and struggle to institute the western
model of liberal democracy with its openness
to religious expression, Christians living
comfortably in the already-established west-
ern liberal democracies could be excused for
believing the world is safe for believers.

Such is not the case. On the tiny
Indonesian island of Ambon rages
one of the most concentrated
efforts in recent years to complete-
ly wipe out a Christian community
and its influence.

Informed sources indicate that
more than 4,000 people have been
killed and 500,000 people rendered
refugees in the Islamic jihad (holy
war) against Christians in the
Malaku Islands chain where
Ambon is located.

The majority of the killed or dis-
placed have been Christians.
However, jihad warriors are
demanding that Muslims, who have
lived peacefully alongside Christians
for many years, now join the holy
war or risk annihilation themselves.

Christian prisoners are being forced to
convert to Islam, including ritual washing
and assignment of a Muslim name. Both
men and women are being circumcised at
gunpoint.

Ferry boats packed with Christian
women and children fleeing the fighting
have simply disappeared. Entire villages
have ceased to exist. Families have been
riven, never to be whole again.

"Their whole philosophy is to eradicate
Christians from Indonesia — to kill them all
or get them to convert," said Jim Brown,
human needs consultant for the



WAR REFUGEES — Ambon villagers flee before the onslaught of Islamic jihad (holy war) troops
on the Indonesian island of Ambon. The world community has ignored the plight of Christians
there who face imminent extermination. (Photo courtesy of International Mission Board)

International Mission Board of the Southern
Baptist Convention, who recently made a
emergency trip to the Malaku Islands.

Ambon is only one tiny spot on a globe
covered with the blood of Christian mar-
tyrs. In the African country of Sudan,
Christian parents are executed before their
children, who are then sold into sexual
slavery. There, too, entire villages have
been wiped out by Muslim extremists.

In China, Christians and members of
other religious groups are routinely impris-
oned and beaten to death. Many others
vanish forever into the Chinese gulag.

Yet, supposedly-civilized western gov-
ernments sit idly by and remain unengaged
as the carnage increases. After all, it's just
Christians going under the sword, isn't it?

Christians, it would seem, are the last

unprotected minority on the planet. The
world community responded with force in
recent years to stop the killing in Somalia,
Rwanda, Burundi, Bosnia, and Kosovo — but
not on Ambon Island or in Sudan and China,
where Christians are being exterminated.

Therefore it is up to us, the well-fed and
secure Christians of the western world, to
speak and act for our brothers and sisters
who cannot defend themselves. It is up to us
to respond to Christian oppression where-
ver it occurs.

Most important of all, it is up to us to see
that the Gospel message continues its
relentless march until everyone on earth
has had an opportunity to accept Jesus
Christ as Lord and Savior before he returns
— and make no mistake, he is returning.

The blood of the martyrs demands no less.

Well, I finally shook loose
of \$30 to buy Jerry
Sutton's book, *The Baptist
Reformation*. Having lived out
of the country for half of the 20
years the book covers, there
were a lot of holes in my
knowledge of the Southern
Baptist controversy. I'll confess
up front that my concluding
opinion of the book is signifi-
cantly more positive than it was
before I read it.

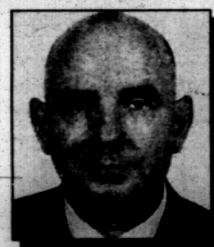
My primary concern, howev-
er, is that there has only been one
perfect, pure, uncorrupted
human endeavor or campaign in
history — the life and ministry
of our Lord. Reading Sutton's
book could convince a naive
person that perhaps there has
been another. In all fairness to
Sutton, he makes no claim to
complete objectivity in his book,
although he does claim to be
objective. I'm sorry to say it, but
objectivity may be his one big
failure. You only have to read the
three pages of testimonials in the
front of the book by a virtual
Who's Who in the Southern
Baptist Convention (SBC)
Conservative/Fundamentalist
Movement to see that. In actual-
ity the book is a glowing testi-
monial to their achievements
over the past 20 years. Honest
perhaps, but not objective.

Sutton has done a remarkable
job of researching and docu-

GUEST OPINION:

Books I'd like to read

By Jim P. Thrash, pastor
Perkinston Church, Perkinston



menting his information and
conclusions. I put the book down
with a new respect for the
accomplishments of the two
architects of the movement, Paul
Pressler and Paige Patterson.
Regardless of whether or not you
like them or agree with them,
they accomplished infinitely
more than anyone believed they
could twenty-one years ago.

My problem is that the book is
too one-sided and narrow-
focused. Surely there have been
some bad decisions by the lead-
ers of the movement somewhere
along the line. There must have
been some questionable actions
or motives among some of the
leaders some of the time. Also,
Sutton paints all opponents of the
movement with the same brush,
with a very negative and suspect
palette. That practice smells polit-
ical at best; vindictive at worst.

I still want to better under-

stand what has happened dur-
ing the past twenty years in
our convention. I am con-
vinced that several more books
need to be written before a
clear, honest, and fair under-
standing can be obtained. I
would like to see the following
books written:

- A book written by a
respected leader of the "loyal
opposition," a so-called moder-
ate who was involved in SBC
activities at the highest level
from the beginning, but has
become persona non grata
since the controversy.

- A book written by some-
one who was an active leader
in the conservative movement
in the beginning, yet became
disenchanted and left the
movement.

- And finally, a book written
by a non-Baptist, totally objec-
tive writer who has no relation-

ship with either side of the
issue and no axe to grind.

I recommend (Sutton's) book
to anyone who wants to get to
the truth of the controversy that
has embroiled our convention
for two decades. I still have the
following concerns, however:

- I agree with the theological
and doctrinal results of the
movement toward historic, tra-
ditional, Baptist conservatism.
However, I still have suspicions
that the process has not been
completely honorable and glo-
rifying to our Lord. Was God
incapable of reviving and
restoring our convention with-
out the political and constitu-
tional maneuvering of a few
ingenious people?

- The SBC "conservative
resurgence" without question
has been 100% successful at the
national, SBC level. I would
like to know how effective it
has been at the state convention
level and in the rank and file
local churches throughout our
convention.

In conclusion, I believe the
words of the Apostle Paul in
Philippians 4:8-9 could serve
us well at this time in our con-
vention's life. If and when we
all begin to practice those
virtues, we will have peace in
our personal lives, in our
churches, and in our conven-
tion — and not before.

China: 200 cities with no Christian witness

BEIJING (BP) — Imagine a city as large as Louisville, Ky., with only a handful of Christians and very few churches — perhaps not any churches at all.

Although such a city does not exist in the U.S., there are more than 200 such cities in China.

With the largest population of any nation in the world and only a small percentage of Christians, China's spiritual needs are tremendous.

Missions resources must first be invested in the largest of cities, including more than 100 China cities with more than 1 million people, five of which have more than 5 million people.

So in China, a country of 1.3 billion

people, there are entire cities as large as Birmingham and New Orleans that are "too small" to be placed on International Mission Board priority city listings.

Fortunately, the last chapter hasn't been written.

Recognizing that an alternative strategy is needed, individual Southern Baptist churches are beginning to adopt these "medium size" cities. Because of the commitment of churches that are willing to go to the edge, each of the cities may soon have someone to share Christ with them.

Determined that these cities will not be ignored or given over to the evil one, Southern Baptists are boldly entering



LOST NATION — In China, a country of 1.3 billion people, there are entire cities as large as Birmingham and New Orleans with only a handful of local Christians and no concerted Christian witness. Determined that these cities will not be ignored or given over to the evil one, individual Southern Baptist churches are beginning to adopt these "medium size" cities. (BP photo)

these cities to pray, receive ministry vision, relate, learn, interact, and share — to the end that all who dwell therein will know the Savior.

In the last six months, three churches have "adopted" 10 of these cities and additional adoptions are underway.

Each adoption has begun with a visioning tour involving two church leaders who have traveled to the prospective city of adoption and spent two days praying for the city, roaming the streets and gaining a vision for the spiritual needs of the city.

From there, each of the adoptions has proceeded to a "scouting tour" that has involved about six church members.

These members travel as tourists and spend their time learning as much as they can about the city, while praying for discernment in how best to reach it for Christ.

Because most of the cities are off the beaten tourist path, the task is not easy. Yet the rewards are great. The first few scouting groups that have traveled into these cities have found that God has preceded them and has "people of peace" waiting for them.

One group was approached by a 22-year-old young woman named Mei Ling, who was so excited about seeing westerners in her city that she just wanted to talk with them. The group was preparing to climb to a high pagoda to pray over the city. Although the young lady was not aware of their purpose in ascending to the high place, she offered to accompany them.

At the bottom of the hill, however, Mei Ling hesitated, saying she was afraid to climb to the top. She explained to the group that because a young couple had killed themselves there

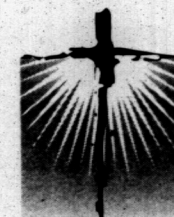
in a lover's suicide pact, she was fearful that she would encounter ghosts on the mountain.

The group took advantage of this open door to explain that they were not afraid, because they had the Spirit of God in their hearts. She acquiesced and continued with the group. At the top, she offered to sing some Chinese songs for the group, and requested that they also sing.

There on the top of the highest place in this unreached city, the group sang, "I Love You Lord." She asked them to sing it again and again, which they did gladly. Then they shared about their faith in Christ and their relationship with Jesus that had

given them the song.

Mei Ling entertained the group in her home over the next four days, introducing them to her friends and showing them the beauty and culture of her city. Four days after initially hearing of the Savior's love, Mei Ling prayed to accept Christ.



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

**THE
SECOND
FRONT PAGE**

Record

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Looking back

10 years ago

Mississippi Baptists record their largest Cooperative Program giving month ever in January, according to Bill Causey, executive director-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. The January total was \$2,267,176, which was \$46,844 higher than the previous high in January, 1990.

20 years ago

The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board announces it will not pay ransom or yield to demands of anyone who would take one of its people hostage. The statement was made after the recent kidnapping of an American staff member related to Wycliffe Bible translation work in Colombia.

50 years ago

The Woman's Missionary Union purchases a downtown Birmingham building for a permanent headquarters. Many of the furnishings are included in the purchase, such as auditorium seating, water coolers, air conditioners, and clocks.

Quake relief underway

HUJ, India (BP) — International aid agencies and the Indian government have undertaken the mammoth task of bringing food, shelter, and clean drinking water to more than 1 million people left homeless by the massive Jan. 26 earthquake, which has left a death toll of 30,000 people to date. Southern Baptists will provide blankets, food, and medical help to people in several areas of Gujarat, an arid region near the Pakistani border, said Jim Brown, human needs consultant for the International Mission Board (IMB). Volunteers also may be needed to help with clean up and rebuilding chores. The board already has released a total of \$70,000 in Southern Baptist relief funds to help purchase blankets, tents, and food, Brown said. More funds will be needed as specific relief projects get underway. Indian government officials said the region faces a severe shortage of tents to house the quake victims, who are facing chilly nighttime temperatures. The Red Cross says unclean water is one of the biggest risks facing survivors. With homes, businesses, and livestock destroyed, it will take many months for people to rebuild their lives. While Gujarat's Hindu and Muslim people need Southern Baptists to give their money and time in relief efforts, they need their prayers more, said one Southern Baptist worker. "Pray for the people of Gujarat State whose lives continue to shake in the emotional and physical aftershocks," the worker said. "Pray that they will receive the food, shelter, and medical care they need and that they will experience God's comfort in the midst of their grief and fear." Contributions toward the relief efforts can be sent to: International Mission Board, General Relief Fund — India Earthquake, P.O. Box 6767, Richmond, VA 23230.

LifeWay training consultants to span globe

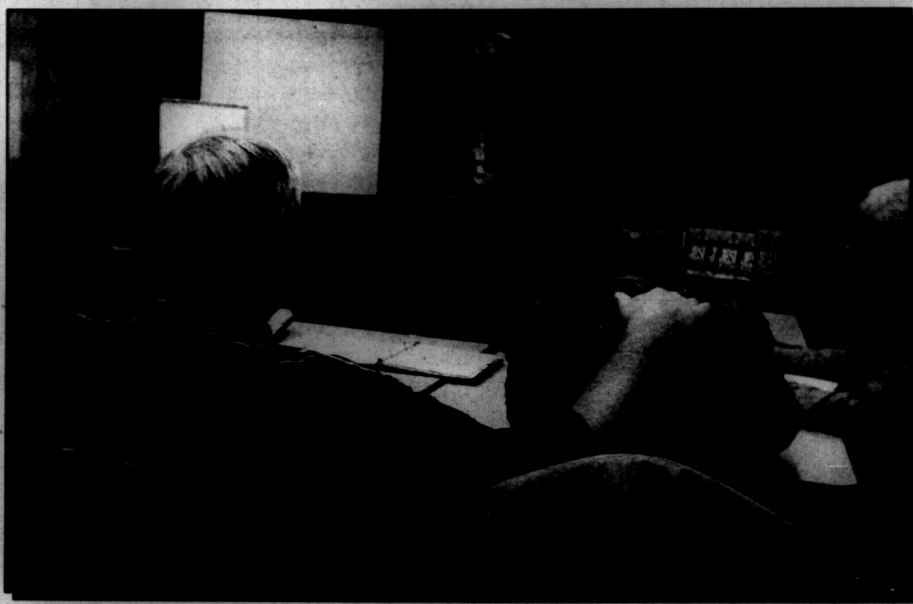
NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Thirty-five English-speaking Christian leaders from 15 countries were challenged to make changing lives their top priority during a training conference at LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention.

The leaders will serve as contract consultants with LifeWay. They will lead conferences for church leaders and local distributors on the use of LifeWay resources in equipping Christians to grow in their faith.

The workshop was the first training conference for English-speaking consultants conducted by LifeWay's international department. Similar training for Spanish-speaking consultants was held in 1999 and 2000 and 55 consultants are now serving in 13 countries.

English-speaking consultants represented Australia, England, Hong Kong, New Zealand, South Africa, Singapore, India, Thailand, Malaysia, Germany, Kenya, Lebanon, Philippines, and Latvia.

LifeWay resources in Spanish and English currently are available from local distributors and in local currency in approximately 70 countries.



INTERNATIONAL CONSULTANTS — LifeWay International missionary Steve Cretin leads in a moment of prayer with English-speaking consultants representing 15 countries. (BP photo by Morris Abernathy)

"We are relying on people like you with a heart for the world who are willing to share part of your lives," Luis Aranguren, director of the international department, said. You will be the fingers for LifeWay — touching lives."

During the conference, participants attended workshops on the life development process as well as beginning, devel-

oping, and multiplying progressive discipleship experiences. They were introduced to LifeWay resources in each discipleship category.

"Discipleship for me is a passion," Aranguren said. "Discipleship is about relationships — a relationship with God and relationships with others. Discipleship is Jesus' strategy for winning the world."

Isaac Yim, a pastor from Malaysia, told employees in a LifeWay chapel service he is "a product of the Lottie Moon missions offering" collected each Christmas season for Southern Baptists' international outreach. "We are linked to Southern Baptists by missionaries. We are able to continue what they left behind," Yim said.

Discipleship "should not emphasize just teaching but should include bringing people to the likeness of Christ," Yim said. "I believe the primary task of the church is to transform lives."

Ted Warren, executive vice president and chief operating officer, told workshop participants LifeWay "made a commitment several years ago to be good stewards of the resources God has given us. We want to share these resources all over the world."

Ag Missions meets Feb. 24 in Louisiana

The Agricultural Missions Foundation, Ltd., will hold its 2001 annual meeting on February 24 at the Baptist Building in Alexandria, La. The meeting holds special significance because attendees will celebrate the 30th anniversary of the foundation and also be part of the organizational meeting of the Agricultural Missions Fellowship in that state to be sponsored by the Louisiana Baptist Men's Department.

A Southern Baptist agricultural missionary will be on hand to discuss how agricultural projects have provided a successful way to teach food production and reach people for Christ, despite political unrest in the area of the world in which he serves.

Jim Brown, human needs consultant with the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, will give a broader report on Baptist agricultural projects around the world that minister to people not only in times of crises but also foster development projects to enable poor people to help themselves.

Registration and refreshments will begin at 9 a.m. The meeting will begin at 10 a.m. and adjourn around 3 p.m. For more information, call (601) 857-8544, or e-mail: hwatso@aol.com.

"RAISING KIDS" (It takes a village — and a whole lot more!)

Our former First Lady wrote a book titled, "It Takes a Village." The premise of the book is that it takes a whole community with institutions, support mechanisms, schools, help resources, recreational facilities, and academic opportunities in order to raise children. Obviously, that is, in part, true. Actually, it takes all that and a whole bunch more!

On a recent Friday night we received, hand-delivered, all three of our wonderful grandchildren. Like the snap of your fingers we went from two folks with no children, to two grandparents outnumbered! You would have thought two grown grandparents would be able to manage three preschool kids with no problem at all — but, it wasn't long until we discovered we were in the minority!

Now, you understand, we had raised three children — so surely we could manage, for several hours, these three offspring! Like every time I get in my wife's car, these kids arrived on "empty." So, the top priority of the evening was to fill their tanks.

This required three different menus: a hot-dog for one; grilled cheese for another; and oatmeal (with something) for the third. The next thirty minutes or so went well as they ate, played with their food, and spilled stuff.

Toward the end of the "munchies," I was holding one, while another softly cried, and all the while I was attempting to pour some more Sprite with my free hand. Wouldn't you know, the phone rang! I put down the



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

Sprite, answered the phone with both younguns on either side, and both crying by now.

This sweet telemarketer on the other end said, "Sir, we are taking a survey on beauty products. Would you answer a few questions?" I replied, "Ma'am, if you are calling asking questions about taking care of grandkids, then I'm your guy — but, if you need information about beauty products, you're gonna have to go somewhere else!"

Hearing the sounds that accompanied my voice of two semi-crying kids, she said, "It sounds to me like you've got your hands full. We'll call back later." I hung up thinking, "Yeah, you do that."

Finally, everyone got full and it was off to the next adventure. We had some videos prepared, knowing full well that these are visual, digital, dot.com kids.

So, the question was, "What do you want to watch?" The two older ones didn't want to watch anything — "We want to go outside!" I said, "Outside?"

They chimed in, "Yes, and ride our bikes." I said, "It's dark!" They said they didn't care. I said, "Well, it's cold!" They said they could put on their coats. I said, "Well, it's rainy!" They said it wasn't raining at the moment. I said,

"Well, it's wet!" They said they would stay out of the water. "Well okay, let's go!" I replied after exhausting every logical reason I could think of for not going outside! So, out the door we went — the two older grandkids and me.

They, of course, immediately divided up on me. One went in one direction and the other went in another direction. Occasionally, we would get together and we really had a great time — in the dark! We climbed some trees, walked in the mud, petted and played with an old stray cat, and then went back in the house, accidentally tracking mud on Grandmother's carpet. Three of us were involved — but you know who got blamed for the mud!

Well, the evening wore on and things went rather smoothly, with only a small spill here and there, and a whine or a cry every once in a while. I was reminded that this is no easy task — this kid-raising business! I was also reminded that it takes a village and a bunch more to raise children. What does it take to raise fairly well-adjusted and productive children?

• It begins with a loving parent, preferably two — a mom and a dad. The ideal would be to have a loving, supportive mother and father, but that does not always happen.

I've known of wonderful people who were raised by only one parent due to death or even divorce, but it sure helps when there are two people working on the project.

God, in his wisdom, built the home with that kind of structure. It sure helps the parent and the child if this loving relationship exists.

• It takes a community of faith. Children are creations of God, made in his image, and for his purpose they come into this world. The Lord, in his genius, provided for a community of faith to help them interpret the will of God, to know his purposes, and experience his grace.

The community is called the church. What a tremendous blessing a child can have growing up in an environment where the things of God are taught and the kindness of God is experienced. Every kid ought to have that opportunity.

• It takes the Lord. I was reminded how soon and how often kids are outside the reach of the most concerned parent, or the most caring grandparent.

Just turn around a time or two and they are gone — into the next room, down the street, off to school, in high-school, in college, in another city pursuing a career — and you cannot reach them, oversee them, or even correct them.

However, the Lord is there and his grace is sufficient for every step and every decision and even to bring them back from the "far-country."

May God help us as parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, and as the Lord's people, to provide all that it takes to help the children be all that he wants them to be.

Fetal surgery offering abortion alternative

WASHINGTON (BP) — Development of fetal surgery to correct physical deformities in unborn babies represents a major advance for pro-life supporters, according to a spokesperson for the National Right to Life Committee.

Mary Spalding Balch, director of state legislation for the Washington-based pro-life organization, said fetal surgery is the new frontier that counteracts bleak scenarios for the child's future. Such forecasts are commonly used to justify abortion, said the mother of two children.

"Medical techniques have proven us right," Balch said. "If we can look at this from a positive outlook, we can get a positive solution. The picture today is much brighter."

Fetal surgery garnered national attention last year in the aftermath of a baby born in Nashville, Tenn., who had corrective surgery for spina bifida before his birth. Much of the coverage surrounded a photograph showing the fetus grasping the finger of the surgeon, although the doctor said it simply showed him pulling the tiny hand out of the womb.

In spite of the controversy, Balch said the corrective surgery on "Baby Samuel," which took place 21 weeks after conception, was a milestone. Press reports said he was healthy and did not have hydrocephalus, a build-up of fluid in the brain that often results from this complication.

In addition, similar operations are taking place every day — which the Right to

Life official called a largely untold story.

"I've come across many neo-natal surgeons," she said. "These cases exist but they don't have the limelight like Samuel did. There are fetal anesthesiologists now."

"But these specialists are few and far between. Other children are falling

[if they didn't] close the lesions [on her back] her hydrocephalus would increase and she would die a normal death. When a doctor says to do that, parents will do it and think they're making the right decision."

However, the parents then changed their mind and sought treatment. Their daughter, now 17, has a disability that would have been less severe if she had been treated more aggressively in the beginning, Balch said.

Fetal surgery is proving many doctors wrong, she added, and could balance the abuse of medical sampling tests that she said often become "search-and-destroy" missions.

For example, a technique known as CVS that takes cells out of the placenta to check for deformities usually leads to abortion, she said. Amniocentesis — which was developed by a pro-life doctor from England — has also been used in this way, she said.

Fortunately, there are other tests that are being used to help mothers correct problems with

their diet or other physical deficiencies before their child is born, Balch said.

However, society still hasn't come to grips with the slippery ethical slope that has resulted from nearly 30 years without any restrictions on abortion, the pro-lifer said.

"A doctor in Germany, writing in a journal after World War II, said once you say there's a life not worth living, you have an unfettered right to kill," Balch commented. "Once society accepts that there's a life not worth living, these children are at risk. [Many] are not going to be born."



BABY SAMUEL — Baby Samuel, in grasping his surgeon's finger, made a worldwide statement about the viability of a 21-week-old life when this photo of his tiny hand grasping a surgeon's finger was published in September 1999. (Photo courtesy of vanguardmag.com)

through the cracks. I wish more obstetricians and gynecologists would learn about these developments."

The technological advances are significant, said Balch, who has been involved in court tests where her agency intervened on an unborn child's behalf. In one case, a judge ordered treatment for a fetus diagnosed with spina bifida, although the parents succeeded in getting the order overturned.

"The parents were told she would be miserable all her life and wouldn't live to age 2," Balch recounted. "They were told

Mother recounts the 'joy of knowing this child'

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Miracle baby Samuel Armas celebrated his first birthday on Dec. 2, 2000. Samuel was the subject of the "most amazing photograph of the 20th century." The image of Samuel's tiny hand reaching out of his mother's womb and grasping the finger of physician Joseph Bruner rocked the world in September 1999.

The previous month, Bruner and a team at Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville, Tenn., had operated on Samuel while he was still in his mother's womb to repair a spina bifida lesion on his spine.

At the time, Samuel was 21 weeks old, the typical age at which abortionists use forceps to draw a fetus feet-first into its mother's birth canal for a partial-birth abortion. In the procedure, the skull remains in the uterus, then is pierced or crushed and the contents are suctioned out.

Until the photo of baby Samuel, pro-choice groups had maintained that a fetus at this age was little more than a not-yet-human "blob." But Samuel proved them wrong.

Samuel's parents, Alex and Julie, had known, of course, that abortion was a legal alternative. Fortunately for Samuel, they didn't even consider it. "We have always believed life begins at conception, and we never wavered, not even when it was actually our decision to make, and not mere words that we say."

Julie explained. "My husband's first words after we received the news were, 'Well, we wanted a baby and this is the one God has chosen to give us.'"

Although Vanderbilt had performed previous fetal surgeries, Samuel was the youngest ever to undergo such an operation. The risky surgery was a resounding success, and Samuel was born on Dec. 2, 1999, weighing 5 pounds, 11 ounces.

In an e-mail to AFA Journal a monthly publication of the American Family Association, Julie Armas provided an update on Samuel as he was approaching his first birthday:

"Samuel continues to do well. He weighed 20 lbs. 12 oz.

on Nov. 27. He wears lower leg braces and twister straps to keep his ankles from turning in. He is pulling up to furniture and can stand holding on to something for several minutes. At our last spina bifida clinic appointment, the orthopedist said he believes Samuel will walk well, and even run! Also, Samuel has never developed hydrocephalus, and the brain malformation seen prenatally appears to have reversed following the fetal surgery. He is, of course, the cutest thing you have ever seen!

"On Thanksgiving, I was making breakfast and my heart and tears started overflowing with praise to God for his goodness in general, but especially where my precious angel was concerned. Most of all, I am thankful to him for allowing me to be born into a home where I was given the Christian heritage and values that would not allow me to make a 'choice' that would have denied me the sheer joy of knowing this child. Furthermore, he gave me the dearest, sweetest husband who

not only supported my decision but makes it clear every day through his actions that he believes Samuel is perfect in every way. We have been so blessed. Praise be to God!"

By Pat Centner, a staff writer for AFA Journal, a monthly publication of the American Family Association. Used by permission.



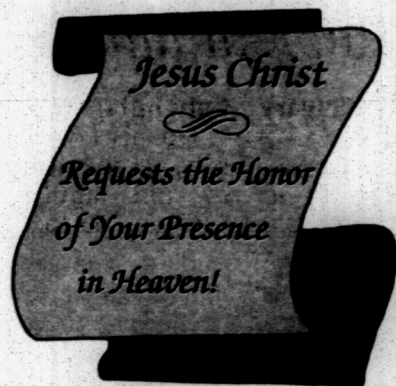
Alex, Samuel, and Julie Armas

'Parents' opt-out proposal counters laws

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (BP) — A coalition of pro-family groups, concerned that California's public school students may be taught that homosexuality is just another lifestyle, have drafted a comprehensive new "opt-out" form that will let parents remove their children from any course where acceptance of the homosexual lifestyle is taught, CNSNews.com reported Jan. 18.

Last year, despite fierce opposition from parents' rights groups, California Gov. Gray Davis signed into law two bills, AB1785 and AB1931, which — according to critics — will expose children to information and activities designed to influence their views about human sexuality and gender identity, including the areas of homosexuality, bisexuality, transvestitism, transsexuality, and other alternative lifestyles.

Gary Kreep of the United States Justice Foundation called one of the bills — AB1785 — "a dagger aimed at the innocence of our children." He said he believes the law will be used "to isolate and target those who do not agree with the homosexual lifestyle."



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1. Lord, I admit that I need you.
(I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death.
(I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you.
(I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with him.
(I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name (John 1:12).

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

Northside Church plans celebrations

Members of Northside Church, Clinton, will celebrate the inaugural service for their new sanctuary on February 18 at 10:30 a.m. The service will begin in the old sanctuary and proceed to new sanctuary, bringing the pulpit Bible and other items into the new sanctuary along with water from the old baptistry to be poured in the new baptistry.

The new sanctuary is dedicated to the late Nancy Bright, a 20-year member who made the church beneficiary in her will for the purpose of building the new sanctuary.

Many special activities are being planned to celebrate this event. On February 18 at 6 p.m., the Mississippi College

(MC) Singers, a 54-voice ensemble conducted by James M. Meaders, will perform.

On March 4 at 6 p.m., the church will celebrate An Evening with Nancy Bright. The Nancy Bright Memorial bronze relief plaque, designed and created by church member Judy Gearhart, will be unveiled during the service to celebrate Bright's life and writings.

On March 25 at 3 p.m., the Cynthia Stringer memorial

piano and the Kay Sheffield memorial organ will be dedicated in a concert performed by Angie Willoughby, MC piano professor, and Billy Trotter, retired MC organ professor.

The sanctuary dedication will be held on May 6 at 3 p.m. Area pastors and local dignitaries will bring their blessings to the church. There will be a reception and open house at 4 p.m. The community is invited.

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JUST FOR THE RECORD



Mission Friends and GAs of Furr Church, Tupelo

Mission Friends and GAs of Furr Church, Tupelo, made cookies during their December study of Lottie Moon. Pictured (standing) are Brittany Moore, Will Dillard, and Audrey Todd; (front row) Tucker Harris, Bailey Kesler, and Caleb Lambert.

Cross-Country, a musical comedy entertainment show, will be presented at Union Church, Brookhaven, on Saturday, Feb. 17. For additional information, call (601) 833-5999 or 833-9203.

Heaven's Gates and Hell's Flames will be presented at Park Place Church, Brandon, Feb. 18-20. Performances will begin at 6 p.m., Sunday, and at 7 p.m. on Monday and Tuesday. For additional information, call the church at (601) 939-6282.

New Orleans Seminary student enlistment office will sponsor a Preview Weekend for prospective seminary students, March 8-10. Registration/check-in will begin at 6:30 p.m. at Providence Guest House. Students must preregister by March 1. Contact the Office of Student Enlistment at 1-800-NOBTS-01, ext. 3303 for registration forms.

Gathering ministers' wives from across the state for fellowship and encouragement is the goal of an upcoming conference to be held April 21 at the Florence Coliseum in Florence, Ala. The conference begins at 9 a.m. and will highlight speakers Betty Baggott, Debbie Childers, and Anita Hill. Baggott is a freelance writer, retreat leader, and director of education at Farmville Church, Opelika, Ala. Childers is an author and conference speaker from Austell, Ga. Hill is a pastor's wife from Red Bay, Ala. For more information call (256) 356-9771; write: Ruth's Ministry, P.O. Box 672, Red Bay, AL 35582; or e-mail ruthsmin@hiwaay.net.

BAPTIST COLLEGE NEWS

Samuel Marshall Gore Art Exhibit — A Sculptor's Faith Journey, opened at Mississippi College with a reception on Feb. 11. The show will run through March 9, in the Samuel Marshall Gore Art Gallery, from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., Monday through Friday. A Sculptor's Faith Journey is a celebration of Gore's 50 years' association with the college, which began in 1951. He is nationally recognized as an artist in the mediums of oils, watercolor, and sculpture. For more information concerning the exhibit, call the art department at (601) 925-3231.

The Mississippi College (MC) Singers, a 54-voice ensemble, will present their spring tour homecoming concert at Northside Church, Clinton, Feb. 18, at 6 p.m. James M. Meaders, conductor.

The Mississippi College Department of English will host the 30th annual Sue Price Lipsey Lecture in the Grand Hall East of the B.C. Rogers Student Center on Feb. 22. The

evening will begin with dinner at 6 p.m. Tickets must be reserved by Feb. 15. A round-table discussion will take place at 7:30 p.m. For more information, call (601) 925-3215.

IMB appoints missionaries to Kosovo

David and Delynn Williams Johnson were among 50 people appointed Jan. 23 by the International Mission Board during a service at Warren Church in Augusta, Ga.

The Johnsons will work among Albanian Muslims in Northern Kosovo. Relying on a history of Baptist presence established through short-term mission trips, the Johnsons will lay the foundation for future church starts. She also

will minister directly to the women in the area.

They live in Somerville, Tenn., and are members of Bellevue Church. They also consider Lakeshore Church in Horseshoe Lake, Ark., and Emmanuel Church in Greenville, influential churches.

He received the bachelor of business administration degree from Delta State University in Cleveland and the master of divinity degree from Mid-

America Seminary in Germantown, Tenn. His desire to serve God in full-time ministry prompted him to re-enroll in college.

During his time at Mid-America Seminary, he went on a mission trip to Romania and spent 10 weeks starting churches in North Dakota with the North American Mission Board.

Delynn Johnson, a native of Memphis, received the bachelor of arts degree from the University of Memphis.

The Johnsons have one child, Kaylee Nicole, born in October of 2000.



David Johnson

Delynn Johnson

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NAMES IN THE NEWS



GAs of Grace Church, Philadelphia

Grace Church, Philadelphia, recently held GA recognition services. Pictured (front row) are Julie Holley, Olivia Tubby, Mary Kathryn Asbill, Julie Osborne, and Amanda Williamson; (back row) Katie Bradley, Chasity Beckham, Meredith Baker, Emily Tillman, Brittany Hodges, and Candace Killens.

Eastwood Church, Indianola, honored Sarah Betts for 28 years of service as financial recording secretary. Pictured (from left) are Billy R. Thomas, pastor; Betts; and James Mitchell, chairman of deacons.

Larry Russell of Pearl is available to fill pulpits in central and southwest Mississippi. For more information, call (601) 932-2395 (evenings).

Steve Walker, music evangelist from Pinola, has been named staff evangelist at Harmony Church, Crystal Springs. Walker has been in full time music evangelism since July of 1996. For additional information, call Walker at (601) 847-4375 or e-mail him at steve@stevewalker.org. Clark Stewart is pastor of Harmony Church.



Battle, Duvall, and Johnson

Grace Church, Philadelphia, recently ordained Scott Battle and Morrise Johnson as deacons. Pictured (from left) are Battle; Dennis Duvall, pastor; and Johnson.

Darel Daniels was licensed to the ministry on Jan. 7 by Oakvale Church, Lawrence County. Randy Gardner is pastor. Pictured (from left) are Gardner; Daniels; and Delos Daniel, church clerk.



Thomas, Betts, and Mitchell



Gardner, Daniels, and Daniel



Providence Church, Grenada, recently ordained Jack McRee and Lonnie Reedy as deacons. Pictured (from left) are McRee, Reedy, and Harvey Springer, pastor.



Waggoner, Hines, and The Edwards

Pilgrim's Rest Church, Ethel, ordained James R. Edwards as deacon on Jan. 21. Pictured are Bobby Waggoner, missions director, Attala Association; Walter Hines, pastor; and Edwards and his wife Sandra.

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'Road to Redemption' movie opens Feb. 16

MINNEAPOLIS (BP) — "Road to Redemption," a comedy film being released by World Wide Pictures — yes, a comedy from the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association — opens in select theaters across the country Feb. 16.

Set on the road between Las Vegas, Nev., and Lake Redemption, Mont., the Road to Redemption for young Amanda Tucker begins when she and her boyfriend wager on a horse race and end up being chased by mobsters for a \$250,000 gambling debt.

They decide to turn for help to Amanda's dear, rich grandfather, Nathan Tucker, whom she hasn't seen since she was a little girl. Amanda is unaware that her estranged grandfather is a witty, kind, and compassionate man with a weak heart, a strong faith in God, and a plan of his own. Instead of refusing Amanda, he makes a deal with her to give her the money she wants after she takes a little trip with him to his favorite fishing hole in Lake Redemption, Mont. — the same place where Amanda sat on her Grandpa's knee so many years before.

The Associated Press (AP) has described the film as a lighthearted comedy that seeks to deliver "a moral message to a trendier, younger crowd." Barry Werner, World Wide Pictures' director of operations, told the AP, "The humor targets 14-year-olds to 40-year-olds."

The film's cast includes Pat Hingle (who played in all four "Batman" movies as Commissioner Gordon, among numerous film and TV roles) as the grandfather and Julie Condra (whose TV and film credits include "The Wonder Years," "Walker, Texas Ranger," and "Nixon") as his granddaughter.

The film is written and directed by Robert Vernon, the lead producer, director, and writer for the "Adventures in Odyssey" series.

Seven cities are scheduled for the February theater release: Minneapolis, Minn.; Phoenix, Ariz.; San Antonio, Tex.; Austin, Tex.; Norfolk, Va.;

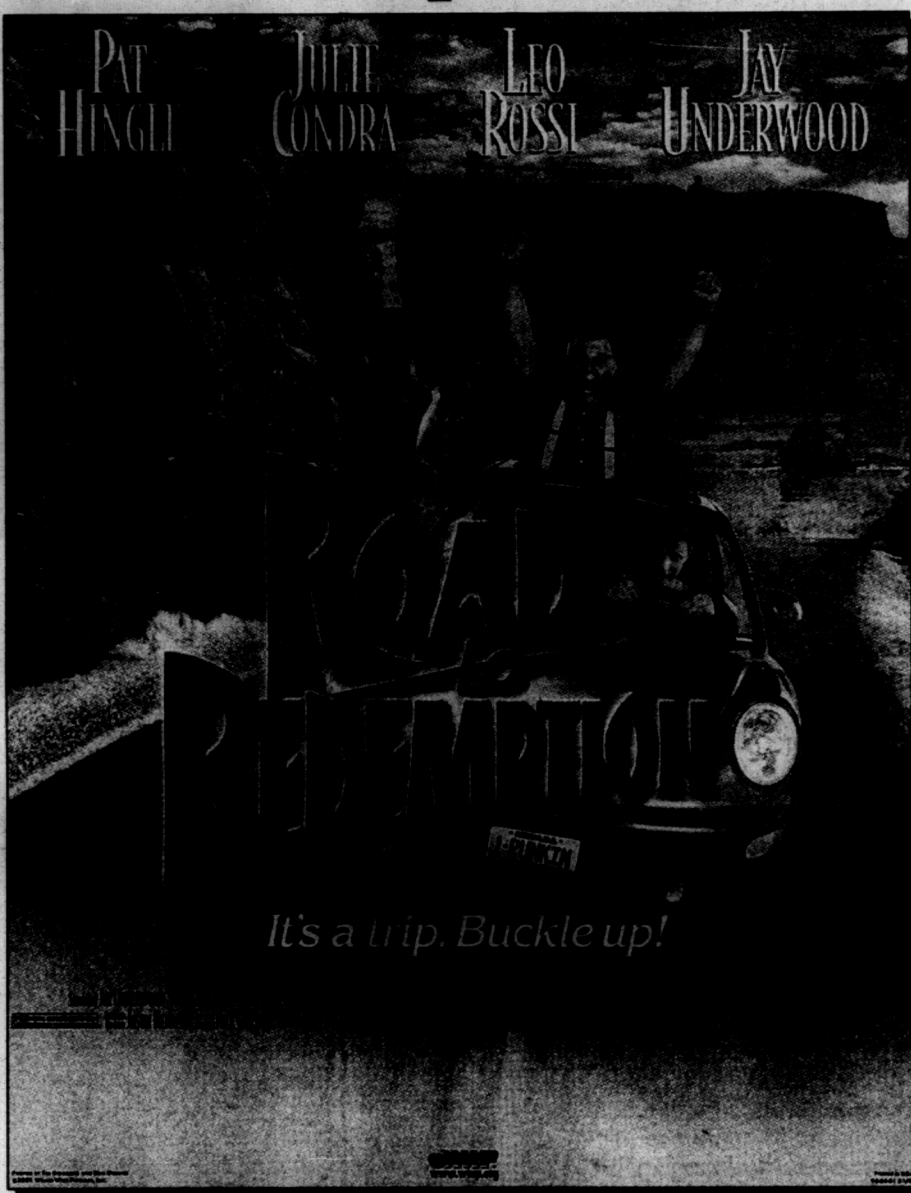
Seattle, Wash.; Nashville, Tenn.; and Portland, Ore.

A second wave of theater releases begins March 9 in the following cities: San Diego, Calif.; Cincinnati, Ohio; Denver, Colo.; Dallas, Tex.; Fort Worth, Tex.; Kansas City, Mo.; and Tampa/St. Petersburg, Fla.

The film will be nationally televised in June followed by a

video and DVD release. Check your local listing for theater times or visit the website <http://www.roadtoredemption.com/>.

World Wide Pictures is the motion picture ministry of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association which has produced more than 125 films since its founding in 1952.



LifeAnswers

Ron Mumbower, Ph.D.
Minister of Counseling
First Church, Jackson

My wife, a fitness instructor when we were dating, has really let herself go since we married. I'm worried about her long-term health and want her around for many years, so how do I approach her about this matter?

First of all, there's a difference in expressing your concern and becoming a nag. For men, looks are very important. A good book is His Needs, Her Needs by Harley. Women need security and emotional closeness. How much time do the two of you spend together, laughing and sharing goals and dreams for the future? If future health problems are going to interfere with those goals, what could the two of you do to work together on this? Are you setting a good example in this area? Keep in mind that it is very important that you love your wife as Christ loves you — not conditioned on her fitness or appearance but with love and understanding. It is also a lot more difficult for a woman to lose weight than it is for us men! Give her time, give her grace, give her support, and give her attention. Watch how things change.

Thank you so much for the insight and comfort you give in your LifeAnswers column. My

husband and I, like many parents, are praying for our teenager. Please continue to address ways of working through problems with teenagers, as so many of us tackle heart-breaking, life-threatening problems with our children. Your column means so much to us. Thank you.

Words of appreciation are always good to hear. Teenagers will be our future leaders, and they probably won't do it like we do — and that may be all right in some ways. Our job as parents is to listen to them, even though we may disagree with what they are saying. The greatest need of young people today is for them to learn how to solve problems for themselves. Parents must point them to the truth that is found in Scripture. Don't say "I told you so." Say, "The Word of God says..." They must make the decision to implement the truths of Scripture into their daily lives. Parents, are you walking the walk as well as talking the talk? How do teenagers see you treating others? What is your speech? How about your morals and values? Do they see consistency, or do they see idol worship and hypocrisy? Think about it.

Send your counseling questions to LifeAnswers c/o The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Please be brief. Name is not required. In central Mississippi, Ron Mumbower can be heard from 9-10 a.m. each Wednesday on WHJT-FM 93.5. Remember: in time of crisis, your pastor can make recommendations on your counseling needs.

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FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, DURANT, MISS., is seeking a full-time minister of music and youth. Send resume to Rev.

Dan Watts, 132 W. Mulberry Street, Durant, MS 39063. For more information call the church at (662) 653-3105.

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RESUMES REQUESTED for FBC Zachary, La. Pastor retiring. Send resume to FBC, c/o Sam Johnson, P.O. Box 593, Zachary, La. 70791. Minimum of 5 years pastoral experience required.

SEEKING DIRECTOR OF CHURCH DEVELOPMENT/GROWTH. Send resumes to: Golden Triangle Baptist Association, 2750 IH 10 East Beaumont, TX 77703.

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LAWRENCE COUNTY BAPTIST ASSOCIATION (Tennessee) is taking resumes for Director of Missions. Send resumes postmarked on or before February 28 to Lawrence County Association of Baptists, 2427 Hwy 43 South, Leoma, TN 38468.

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Editor:

Catherine Lee
Mt. Olive

Editor:

I was so disappointed at "leading churches" in our area that rearranged their week-end schedules to fit the TV viewing.

Keep telling it like it is!
Nonaree B. Calloway
Clinton

Editor:

Please allow me to respond to Allen Rhodes' January 11 letter regarding how much the North American Mission Board (NAMB) pays an unnamed missionary in Oregon. We appreciate his concern for our missionaries. However, I am not able to verify the validity of his information or to even attempt to explain the situation since I don't know to whom he is referring.

Martin King
Dir. of Convention Relations
NAMB, Atlanta

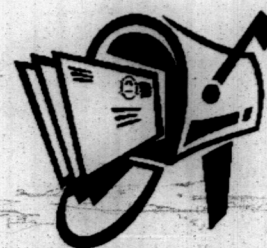
Editor:

Why should the state subsidize this vile "industry" further?

Dr. Roger Greene, Host
P.O. Box 1105, Clinton, MS 39060
(601) 924-5403
E-mail: mrgreke@aol.com

Editor:

**Rebecca Williams
Gautier**



When in the judgement of the editor a given issue has received sufficient attention, correspondence dealing with it will no longer be published and a notice will be printed to that effect.

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FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

Announcing good news

Luke 4:16-30

By Sharon Neff

Have you become too familiar with the things of God and the good news of the Gospel?

I am the librarian at my church and my husband is the pastor of the Chinese Mission there. Neither of these is a full-time position, but I find myself at the church several times a week.

Sometimes I just drop in for coffee and conversation as a break in the middle of a busy day. All of the staff members and other personnel are friends and we have little birthday parties at church and act silly sometimes.

There are times on Sunday morning when it's hard for me to get into the worship mode, when "going to church" has about the same

significance to me as "going to the store."

Sometimes I have difficulty realizing that the people that I laughed with on Friday are the same people who have the awesome responsibility of leading our congregation in an encounter with God on Sunday.

The building we call a church has become so common in my life that occasionally I fail to recognize what is going on within its walls: amazing things are happening in people's lives as they respond to God's Word being taught and preached.

It is then that I come to understand that I have become too familiar with church and the things of God and I have to work on regain-



Neff

ing that perspective of wonder and worship.

We can become too familiar in other ways too. A person who has been reared in a Christian home, accepted Christ at an early age, and attended church Sunday after Sunday for years can find himself comfortable, regarding the Gospel message as something that everyone just believes.

On the other hand, someone who has been exposed to the Gospel time after time and who knows something of the Bible, yet has not accepted the message, might seem to be bored or just too familiar with it and may never respond appropriately.

We are so like those in Jesus' hometown of Nazareth when he preached in the synagogue there. Luke records in chapter four that Jesus stood to read the scripture from Isaiah, then sat down to teach, as was the custom for rabbinical teaching.

He had chosen a passage that prophesied his own coming and then amazed the congregation by saying, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing" (v. 21). Just imagine it — the Living Word was reading and expounding upon the Word!

Jesus was proclaiming the good news, the best news possible for everyone. Yet how did they respond? They knew him too well and took him for granted.

They knew him as merely the son of a local carpenter. They had watched him grow up and he had played with their children. They could not believe that he was the Son of God, the One through whom God was making salvation and redemption possible.

They may also have been too familiar with the message. The Jews had been waiting for the Messiah, the promised Savior, for centuries. They had heard the scriptures read and the prophecies repeated over and over.

They had in their minds' eye a picture of how the Messiah would come and what type person he would be, and for the people of Nazareth, at least, that picture did not include a "hometown boy" as the Messiah. To many of them what Jesus said was blasphemous and it made them so angry that they tried to get rid of him permanently (v. 29).

Because of the unbelief of the people of Nazareth, Jesus was unable to minister and perform miracles there as he did in other places. Because of their familiarity, few people accepted his good news and most missed out the redemption and blessings he offered.

You may want to examine your own life and see if you have become too familiar with him. From time to time, most of us need to work at recapturing the awe and wonder of the One who has saved us and the deep appreciation of the good news he brings. I know I do.

Neff is a member of First Church, Greenville.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Trusting God's promises

Acts 27:18-26, 33-36, 44b

By Lee Yancey

Paul could have been set free from the Caesarean prison had he not appealed to Caesar. Getting to Rome from Caesarea was no easy task. Theoretically, by sea was the faster way unless, of course, you happened to get shipwrecked, which is what happened to Paul and all aboard.

This lesson is about God's promise to Paul that no lives would be lost during the storm and shipwreck as he traveled as a prisoner to Rome. In these scriptures notice Paul's firm trust in God's promises and his encouraging others to believe in God. Even in difficult times, Paul trusted God.

Hopeless situation

(vv. 18-20). During a violent storm, the ship, upon which Paul and his companions were sailing, was being unmercifully battered. The sailors had passed ropes underneath the hull of the ship to try and hold it together. The next day the crew threw all the cargo overboard and finally all the ship's tackle was cast away.

Luke records that after many days of total darkness, with the storm continuing to rage, that they had given up all hope of being saved. Many people, like these sailors, depend upon their own efforts to get through crises only to find themselves in seemingly hopeless situations.



Yancey

Hopeful information (vv. 21-26). Paul predicted before they left Crete that their voyage was doomed but no one listened. After drifting for several days in the storm without eating, the men were scared, tired, hungry, and hopeless.

Paul reminded the men that he had foreseen this tragedy but encouraged them because the Lord had revealed to him that not a single life would be lost. In a dream, "an angel of God — whose I am and whom I serve," gave this hopeful information.

The verse, in quotations above, reveals that Paul was immensely secure in his identity (a child of God) and his purpose (a servant of God). Because Paul had to appear before Caesar, all 276 men aboard the ship would be spared. The men were gaining

confidence in Paul's leadership as a man of God. Persistent encouragement to trust God can bring hope to discouraged people.

Helpful encouragement (vv. 33-36). The ship, sailing out of control, began to approach land. The sailors took soundings and the depth of the water was more shallow each time. Fearing that their ship would be crushed against the rocks, the sailors dropped four anchors and prayed for daylight.

At dawn, Paul encouraged the sailors to eat and relax because no one was going "to lose a single hair from his head." He broke bread before them and gave thanks to God before the men. Encouraged by Paul's presence, words, and faith in God, the men ate and regained their strength. Afterwards they threw the remaining grain in the sea to lighten the ship. God often chooses to use those who have

faith in him to encourage others to trust him during crises.

Honored promise (v. 44b). Daylight finally came and the sailors could see land. Deciding to run the ship aground on a sandy beach, the sailors cut the anchors loose and raised the sail. The ship became bogged down on a sand bar and the ship was ripped apart by the tremendous force of the waves.

Some of the soldiers wanted to kill the prisoners to prevent their escape, but the centurion wanted to keep Paul alive. Those who could swim swam for the beach and those who could not floated on planks or pieces of the ship. All 276 made it safely to the beach.

God had revealed to Paul that all 276 would live. There were times when that seemed unlikely, but the sailors learned that they can trust God's promises.

Yancey is consultant for the Mississippi Baptist Christian Action Commission.

Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events and activities in cooperation with the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

THE BAPTIST

All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submission is one week prior to publication.

Articles should be typed, double-spaced, on one side of the page. Please include a return address and phone number.

Submit articles and photos to: Baptist Record, P.O. Box 39205, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 352-3230. E-mail: baptistrecord@mcn.net

Photographs may be color or black and white, instant photos and digital printouts are acceptable. Digital photos may be submitted via e-mail, (b) 3.5 inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted.

THE VILLAGE VIEW



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Gifts of Honor and Memory

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

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George Dale, Mississippi State Insurance Commissioner, recently visited The Baptist Children's Village with other friends and enjoyed lunch with Ronny Robinson, executive director, and Henry Glaze, assistant executive director, in the new Pigott Cafeteria on the India Nunnery Campus.

Draper: Fitness can affect witness, ministry

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Shortness of breath and a dose of old fashioned guilt brought Jimmy Draper to the point of improving his personal fitness. Draper, president of LifeWay Christian Resources of the

observation. Within a period of six weeks, several persons who did not know each other had commented to Draper that they were concerned about his health. Among those was LifeWay's wellness consultant, Tommy Yessick.

"I had heard him preach at the National Conference for Church Leadership, and I could hear a rhythmic wheezing as he preached. I made an appointment and I told him, 'This is kind of awkward, because you are my boss, but I want you to stay around. Let's see what we can do.' I made a chart of things he could do, and we met periodically to check on his blood pressure and other measures of progress."

"The most obvious thing I could do was lose weight," Draper said.

To make matters worse, he said, "I not only felt bad; I also felt guilty. Before I could deal with my weight, I had to look at it as a sin. It was a matter of spiritual stewardship, a matter of example. How we maintain our physical well-being is a testimony to our faith. Our appearance conveys some things about our discipline and self-control."

Yessick worked with Draper on some lifestyle changes he could accommodate in his travel schedule and long in-office, desk-bound days in Nashville. Those included modified eating habits and increased exercise.

"I'm not a flat belly or a marathon runner," Draper said. "Realistically, I'm probably 10 pounds heavier than the doctors want me to be."

At a weight that hovers between 25 and 30 pounds less than he weighed two years ago, Draper said he has learned that fitness, like faith, is a journey, not a destination.

"My goal is not a certain weight, but a certain level of health," he reflected. "I've learned I can manage my weight and my diet. I am not dieting. I could go on a diet, but if I go on one, I gain again when I go off of it."

"I know I am going to die some day," he acknowledged, "and I know God is in never weighed more than 200 pounds until he left control. But the pastorate to head the Nashville-based publishing agency. LifeWay's wellness consultant, Tommy Yessick (left) worked with Draper on some lifestyle changes he could accommodate in his travel schedule and long in-office, desk-bound days in Nashville. (BP photo by Morris Abernathy)

LifeWay offers resources to assist persons who want to improve their personal fitness. Through LeaderCare, a ministry of personal development resources for ministers and their families, wellness consultation and resources are available by con-

tacting Tommy Yessick at tommy.yessick@lifeway.com. LifeWay's discipleship area offers "Fit 4," a goal-oriented educational health plan that stresses a balanced approach to wellness. For more information about Fit 4, visit www.fit4.com.



DRAPER BEFORE — Shortness of breath and a dose of old fashioned guilt brought LifeWay president Jimmy Draper to the point of improving his personal fitness. (BP photo Jim Veneman)



DRAPER AFTER — Jimmy Draper (right), LifeWay president, recalled recently that he had never weighed more than 200 pounds until he left control. But the pastorate to head the Nashville-based publishing agency. LifeWay's wellness consultant, Tommy Yessick (left) worked with Draper on some lifestyle changes he could accommodate in his travel schedule and long in-office, desk-bound days in Nashville. (BP photo by Morris Abernathy)

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RZV QKQF BQVQLFOZ
MQVQ UQ STDDQP;
WQSTLNQ SBVCNO TDNZ
NLRRQVQP RZV LN,
DQTKCFA LN TF
QJTEGDQ, OBTO UQ
NBZLDP RZDDZM BCN
NOQGN.

RCVNO GQOQV OMZ:

OMQFOU-ZFQ

Clue: U = Y

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Hebrews Four: Twelve.

Wellness affects medical costs, Annuity Board says

DALLAS (BP) — With the rising costs of health care, medical insurance and prescription drugs, many Southern Baptists are looking for ways to save money and improve their personal health and overall well-being.

Health and well-being took center stage at the Annuity Board of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1998 when the board made significant changes in the administration of its self-funded medical and long-term disability plans. The Annuity Board provides medical coverage for more than 31,500 Southern Baptist pastors, ministers and employees serving in churches and institutions throughout the U.S.

"As we made administrative changes in our insurance area, we also decided to change our overall focus from simply providing our participants with life, disability, and medical products to becoming an advocate in helping our participants make wise choices about these decisions," said Doug Day, managing director of the Annuity Board's Insurance Services Division.

An ongoing feature of the emphasis is the wellness exhibit at the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting cosponsored by the Annuity Board and LifeWay Christian Resources' LeaderCare initiative.

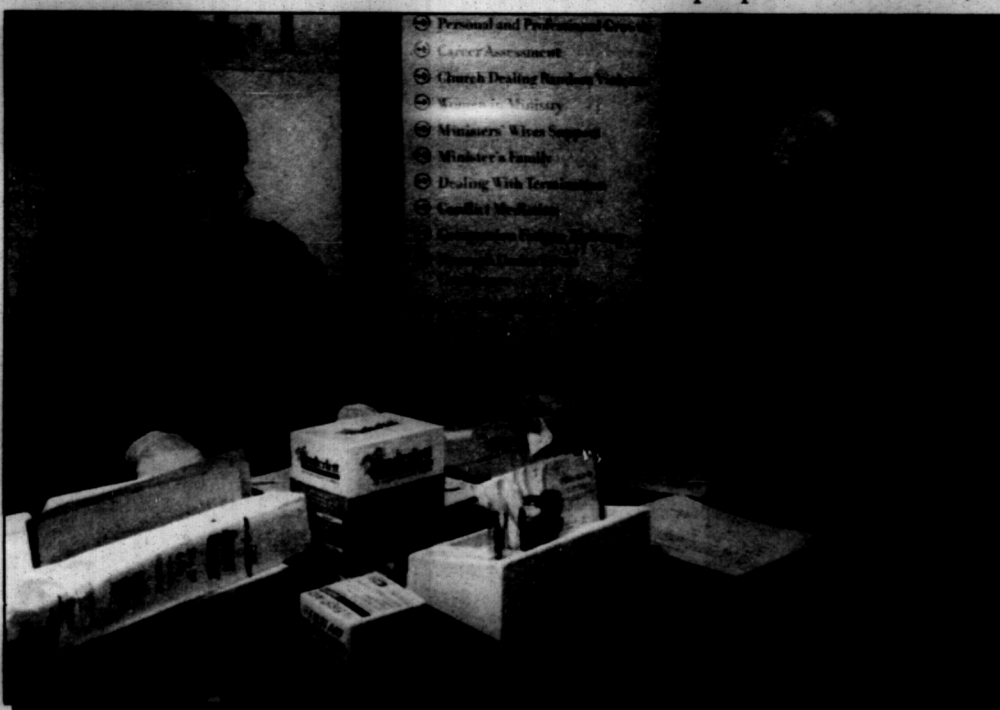
This exhibit premiered in 1997 during the SBC in Dallas. More than 1,000 people

came through the exhibit during the three-day meeting and completed a short survey about their health habits along with a blood pressure test. The resulting study was not scientific because the participants were not randomly selected.

However, the sample was large enough to suggest trends about health habits within the Southern Baptist Convention. Some results were encouraging, such as no reports of alcohol abuse and almost no reports of tobacco use.

But other trends were not as positive. Most individuals surveyed were heavier and more sedentary than the national average. About half did not eat breakfast daily, and almost a third were not getting enough sleep. A third had high blood pressure, and half were not on medication for this condition. Of those whose cholesterol had previously tested, half reported it was high.

For information about Annuity Board products, call (800) 262-0511 or visit the board's Internet site at www.absbc.org.



CHECK-UP — Tommy Yessick (left) checks LifeWay employee Steve Lawrence's cholesterol levels. (BP photo)